

EDITORIAL

The Mild Hindu

THE UPANISHADS EXHORT strength and dispel the darkness of ignorance, bringing clarity to our befuddled minds. They clear the cobwebs of confusion, remove weakness, and restore strength. The Upanishadic rishis were bold enough to dismiss the entire universe as a fanciful imagination and took all the focus to the Self. The Puranas speak of Sage Parashurama, who wiped off all ruler-clans from the face of the earth, not once or twice, but twenty-one times. They also mention Sage Vishvamitra, who created a separate heaven for one who had taken refuge in him. They speak of the fierce goddess, who chopped to shreds asuras, who were destroying the peace of the earth. Which Hindu scripture talks of weakness? Which Hindu text encourages cowardice? Which Hindu scripture denounces strength? None.

Today's Hindu has earned the epithet 'mild', which has been handed over by the ancestors over several centuries. However, in recent times, the Hindu is behaving in a way that conforms to the derogatory meaning of this term. Swami Vivekananda used to say that the epithet 'mild Hindu' should not be seen as a criticism but as an acknowledgement of the resilient and patient spirit of Hinduism. The present-day Hindu, however, is bent on proving one's qualifications, all on the negative side, to be called 'mild'. Almost giving up one's glorious past, today's Hindu wants to comfortably piggyback on the achievements of other cultures and races, and has become accustomed to being a slave. The Hindu has lost one's nerve and also lacks any spine. Who can criticise Hinduism

or the Hindu people? Anyone. And, instead of addressing such criticism or silencing baseless allegations, today's Hindu takes pride in becoming

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partners with those who want to see the end of the Hindu race. Hinduism or the Hindu race will never perish because, as Swamiji said, if that were to happen, religion and spirituality would disappear from this world. So, Hinduism does not need anyone to protect or preserve it. It has stood the test of time over millennia of suffering, and would continue to do so in the future too. But, every time a Hindu is attacked or hurt, it is not Hinduism that takes the beating but it is the faith of that individual Hindu that goes down. And it is really an unfortunate and dismal state of affairs, that the present-day Hindu is overenthusiastic in criticising Hinduism or attacking the Hindu people.

A Hindu scholar today, takes pride in denigrating all the Hindu scriptures. Any attempt to disseminate the Hindu thought is met with the strong 'intellectual' objection that Hinduism should not be transmitted or studied. That is illogical. If Hinduism does not need dissemination or studies, then no religion does. Why is it that the present-day Hindu is keen on seeing other religions being transmitted or studied and knows so much about them, while knowing next to nothing about Hinduism? Today's Hindu does not have the courage even to call Hinduism a religion and is dumb enough to call it just 'a way of life'. This again does

not make any sense. If Hinduism is a way of life, so is every other religion. If that is so, can we call the practitioners of other religions as Hindus? And, even if one were to do so, will the followers of other religions accept that? The answer is a resounding 'no'. Then, in what sand is today's Hindu burying one's head and trying to live in an illusory world?

There is no systematic tradition of transmitting the basic knowledge of Hinduism to Hindu children. All they know of it is some rituals, whose meaning and importance are never explained to them. As a result, successive generations of Hindus are fed on false information about Hinduism that they get from popular culture and turn out to be avowed haters of Hinduism, thus fulfilling the aims of vested interests.

It seems that by some inexplicable process of evolution, Hindus have totally lost the qualities of valour, shame, honour, and sensitivity. Else, how could one explain the fact that in India, the land that cradled the masters of Hindu thought, hundreds of Hindus are being made homeless, numerous temples are being destroyed, several images of Hindu deities are being vandalised, sacred Hindu mantras are being made fun of—and all this is being supported by powerful Hindus and many a time, Hinduism is being ridiculed by Hindus themselves. Upon being questioned, these Hindus very calmly reply that they do all this to express their 'freedom of expression'. But, what 'freedom of expression' warrants or gives one right to commit an act of dishonouring one's own Mother?

No religious scriptures are bolder than the Vedas, which proclaim that the highest realisation is not to be attained by the mere parroting of Vedic sentences. But, the Vedas do not ask one to live without any honour and dignity. Today's Hindu considers everything non-Vedic to be gospel truth and anything Vedic to be superstitious. Hinduism accepts all paths to God. But,

today's Hindu conveniently forgets that other religions are not so catholic and generous. Today, no religious other than the Hindu, even those belonging to faith-traditions that have branched off from Hinduism, believes that all religions are true. Therefore, it is important that the Hindu should accept all religions as true but should not denounce Hinduism itself as false. Hordes of Hindu 'scholars' unashamedly proclaim Hinduism to be no religion or an 'umbrella' religion, the Vedas to be non-Hindu, yoga to be non-Hindu, and India itself to be divested of its Hindu origins. Hankering and drooling after glitter and glamour, these 'academics' would disown their Mother without batting an eyelid. Any attempt to study Hinduism in-depth is denounced and promptly stopped. And, the only time when Hinduism seems interesting to these shameless and honourless people is when videos of white-skinned children chanting Hindu scriptures circulate on the Internet. Paraphrasing what Swamiji asked his disciples in a different context, one is tempted to ask: 'Is there not water enough in the ocean to drown these so-called scholars and academics with their books, computers, and all?'

Swamiji said: 'Strength is life and weakness is death.' Those who claim to be not weak and yet cannot assert to be strong are worse than being weak. Dumb 'neutral' witnesses to an act of injustice are worse than those who commit that injustice. Swamiji was proud that this 'mild' Hindu race has produced fighting women like the Rani Lakshmibai of Jhansi. And, while aboard a ship, Swamiji lifted by the collar, an Englishman who was abusing India. The Hindus need to be patient and resilient but they also need to strengthen and express the fighting streak in them and have the courage to take to task those who have the nerve to malign Hinduism.

